BABY BANDIT BUYER

A LITTLE HISTORY AND A LITTLE MORE ADVICE, FROM STEVE BERGMAN

LAUNCHED BACK IN 1995 (yes, as long ago as that!) and the best selling bike in 1997. Not surprising really. So what's it like?

The specifications tell us it's got an across the frame four cylinder engine chucking out 78bhp at 10,500rpm and the peak torque of 39ft/lbs comes along at 9500rpm. OK. So if you want maximum performance you need to keep the engine spinning hard. In reality there is plenty of power through the rev band, making the Bandit an easy bike to ride. Much loved by those with a penchant for antics, the Bandit gives a good mix of stability and flickability. The vertically challenged will love the 805mm seat height and most will like the very practical riding position. Other

touches such as enough space under the seat to stuff a lightweight pair of leggings helps practicality no end.

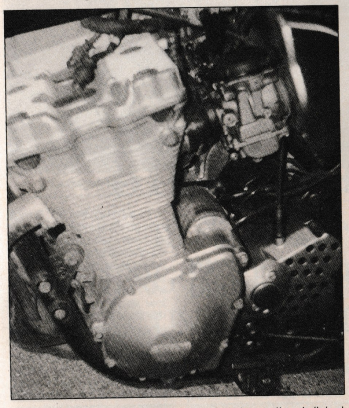
A wide-styled 19 litre fuel tank – just over 4 gallons – gives you a good area to fit your tank bag. Sedate riding should see 45 to the gallon. Careful use mixed with the odd bit of fun, normal use for most, will work out around 40mpg. But a good thrash will see the fuel consumption fall to as low as 33. This works out at 135, 120 and 100 miles between fill-ups. A bit low for serious touring, which is a shame really as the bike is comfortable enough and styled so that the rear end will take throw-over panniers, enabling high expectations for touring.

Mind you, if you haven't got the one with a fairing there's plenty of aftermarket fairings available which always helps! A purpose built aftermarket fairing will cost around $150 if it's colour matched.

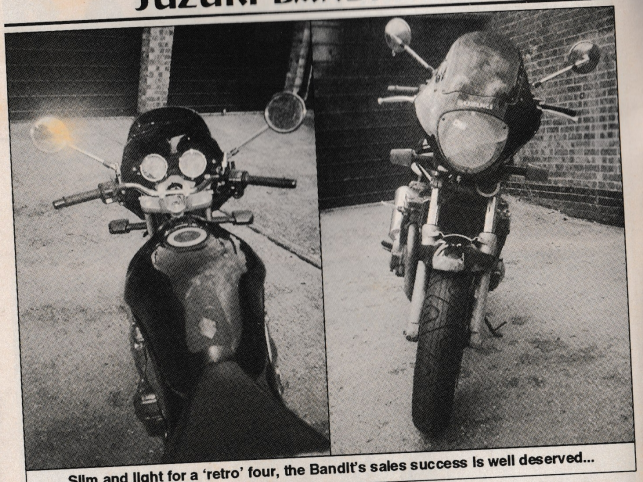
Back racks are pretty cheap these days and fitting one will make the paintwork on the tail last much, much longer. Fitting a hugger to the back wheel will also make loads of sense unless you like periodically stripping down the suspension linkage at the back! Expect to pay around £35 for the back rack and $45 for the hugger.

Brakes are more than adequate, even given the budget calipers fitted. Like loads of other Japanese bikes these days the calipers fitted to the Bandit do not have gaiters fitted to their pistons. Prolonged winter use will see road crap build up on them leading to problems when you come to fit new brake pads. An old toothbrush and some brake fluid will assist the clean up, just don't splash it over the nice Suzuki paintwork!

Chains can last forever these days. You help this by administering the correct lubricant or the fitting of an



WITH SO MANY SPEED HUMPS ABOUT THESE DAYS THE EXHAUST COLLECTOR IS IN REAL DANGER OF GROUNDING OUT, HANGING, AS IT DOES, LOW DOWN UNDER THE SUMP. BE CAREFUL!



Slim and light for a 'retro' four, the Bandit's sales success is well deserved...

automatic chain oiler for about $50.

Bridgestone's tyres work just fine on the Bandit and you can take advantage of their dual compound rubber to get the best out of your tyres. Giving grip when leaned over but having a harder compound in the centre to try to stop the tyres going square is great, but it has to be said that if you're looking for performance then Pirelli Dragons will perform better in the grip stakes. You can expect around 6000 miles from a front Dragon but only 3500 from the rear unless you're riding carefully all the time. It should be remembered that even a small change in the tyre height, perhaps by fitting a lower profile tyre, may effect the ground clearance. With so many speed humps about these days the exhaust collector has a real chance of grounding out, hanging, as it does, low under the sump. Loaded up for touring and carrying a pillion will probably ground out the collector anyway.

SALES AND AWARDS HAVE SHOWN THAT SUZUKI HAVE BUILT A WINNER!

To sum up, the 600 Bandit has good handling and has proved itself reliable. Careful choice of tyre to suit your riding style and the use you put the bike to is easy given the 17 inch wheel sizes. The low seat height will assist the short without inconveniencing the tall.

Stacked against this is the fuel consumption which works out more than some more powerful bikes, allied to the small tank size giving poor range between fuel stops.

But, overall sales and awards have shown that Suzuki have built a winner in the 600 Bandit and if you're looking for a good all-rounder the 600 Bandit will fit the bill.